

"CUBA REMAINS A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN US AND THE SOVIET UNION": Address by the Secretary of State (Rusk) Before the American Legion Convention, Miami Beach, Fla., September 10, 1963 (Excerpt)⁸⁰

One of the items of unfinished business about which all of us are especially concerned is Cuba. The emergence of a Marxist-Leninist regime has been unanimously rejected by the nations of this hemisphere. When the introduction of strategic missiles into Cuba directly threatened our security, President Kennedy moved promptly to remove that threat. But Cuba remains a major obstacle to normal relations between us and the Soviet Union because, as has been repeatedly said, the political or military intrusion of Moscow into this hemisphere and the continued ambition of Castro to interfere in the affairs of other nations in the hemisphere are neither acceptable nor negotiable.

⁸⁰ See footnote 75, doc. III-29, *ante*.

Ante, doc. III-9.

⁸¹ Department of State press release No. 464 (text as printed in the Department of State *Bulletin*, Sept. 30, 1963, pp. 490-496).

A series of actions have been taken to support this policy. Our Armed Forces have been given missions to insure that Cuba not become a military threat to us or to any other of its neighbors. We have been working successfully with the other countries of the hemisphere on measures to block the movement of Castro subversives. Cuba's economic and political links with the Western World have been dramatically reduced, and it is increasingly clear that the present regime in Cuba is a growing burden for the Cuban people as well as for those elsewhere who try to sustain it in power.

Disillusionment with the Castro regime continues to spread both within Cuba and among Castro's former admirers in other countries. The example of Castro's Cuba is not one which any sane person who wishes a better life for his own people can any longer think of imitating. Moreover, it is unthinkable that the brave and talented people who inhabit Cuba will long endure this subjection into which they have been betrayed by a fanatical minority.

There are some who have urged that the Cuban problem be solved quickly by acts of war against that island. If such proposals are made with a readiness to accept the total consequences—in Cuba, here, throughout the rest of the world—of such actions, the proposal has at least the virtue of consistency. But if the proposal is made on the assumption that the other side would simply collapse, the proposal has no roots in reality. Those who carry the full responsibility must determine the nature of any such threat and take the measures appropriate to the threat itself. We saw last year in Cuba a threat which required us to face the immediate prospect of war. The elimination of that threat gives us a chance to pursue by other means the unanimous determination of the hemisphere that a free Cuban people will take their place again in the family of this Western Hemisphere.